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## CONNECTICUT OYSTERMEN TO GIVE VIGOROUS BATTLE TO PROPOSED PRODUCTIVITY TAX

Big Growers Intimate That Further Burden Upon Their Industry Threatens to Drive It Altogether Out of Connecticut Waters.

Connecticut oystermen are to oppose as vigorously as ever the proposed legislation that aims to put a tax upon the productivity of the oyster grounds in the waters of this state, and at a meeting held in Bridgeport, on Tuesday, a committee was appointed by the Connecticut Oyster Growers to make a fight against the passage of the bill for productivity tax. A measure such as is now sought was defeated two years ago in the legislature. The oystermen feel that they are picked out as an object for raising more revenue for the state, and like other classes of taxpayers to the state who are just now being looked upon as the source of revenue, they are put in a position to defend themselves from further taxation.

Frank J. Mansfield, of Fair Haven, who is one of the large oystermen of the state who will be affected if the productivity tax goes through, declares that the attempt to saddle any more taxation upon the oyster industry of the state is an outrage and should be stopped. He says that he strongly is against it and all the oystermen are to object to it. Other Fair Haven oystermen declare that the increased taxation would drive the oyster business away from Connecticut altogether.

The claim is made that 95 per cent of the oysters used in the market are brought from other states though the beds in the waters of Connecticut are growing grounds that are not finishing grounds for the oyster.

The "Oyster & Fishermen" which is the official organ for the oyster growers, prints the following about the oyster taxation situation in Connecticut:

"Intelligent public opinion is now demanding that great productive industries shall not be subjected to dangerous and serious depreciation by unnecessary and oppressive restrictions, or by misdirected official interference. Intelligent men agree that corporate management should have suitable regulation, but when the movement for such regulation becomes so exaggerated as to destroy or cripple our productive industries, popular opinion swings back to the realization that our most important industries must not be sacrificed."

"There is no more striking illustration of the result of harassing interference than the history of the oyster industry in Connecticut. From reasonable prosperity and growth it has in recent years been reduced to a depressed condition."

"This is true of the industry in both Rhode Island and Connecticut, and while the business of growing oysters by Maryland, Virginia, and other states is being maintained, the business in these two states is rapidly declining. Many of the leading firms in Connecticut have in the last few years effected a complete withdrawal of their business, and many who have not facilities for making the change, have gone out of the business. There are now thousands of acres of oyster grounds in Connecticut that have been idle for years. The history of the industry will be instructive."

Between 1875 and 1881 the oyster growers created a great food producing industry in the deep and barren waters of Long Island Sound. Under the same terms to every citizen of the state alike.

"This was not a franchise granted to some particular person or corporation which may of necessity become a monopoly, but the grounds were in the nature of homestead settlements in which the state had the ownership and the industry to try to cultivate these lands were permitted to do so. Those who did take the risk were regarded as venturers and not as common speculators. It was a case of the 'foot and his money' soon parted."

"Those pioneers encountered many difficulties and hardships, but they succeeded in establishing a food producing industry which has furnished employment for thousands and food for millions."

"After a few years, the demand for ground oysters grew so large that the success of the pioneers and a Shell Fish Commission was created principally to sell oyster grounds of the state in order to benefit the state treasury. Under the extraordinary administration of this commission the expenditure for selling these oyster grounds far exceeded the proceeds so that the state instead of netting forty-five thousand dollars before 1887, it had in fact expended forty-five thousand dollars more than the proceeds of the grounds."

"In 1887 the oyster growers petitioned the General Assembly to abolish the Shell Fish Commission, but through political influence these officers were retained for more or less deserving office holders."

"Six or seven years ago, a movement was started to increase the revenue from oyster grounds to the state. This was based upon the fact that the general assembly had voted and established a food producing industry which had not yielded nearly as much income to the state per acre, as the oyster grounds of Rhode Island did."

"This has been shown repeatedly to be an entirely superficial meaning, for the Rhode Island oyster industry, characterized in Rhode Island, Connecticut planters removed their business from Connecticut to a large extent, and established a business in Rhode Island because grounds were so much superior. But even in that case, later developments have proved that the rentals in Rhode Island were far too high because the industry in Rhode Island has proved unable to carry these burdens, and is now depressed and is rapidly decreasing as it is of the state of Connecticut."

"Although the foundation for the claim was entirely superficial and unworthy of consideration, nevertheless it had remained a foundation for a constant crusade against the oyster growers of Connecticut, and during the past six or eight years the Connecticut oyster growers have been

compelled to defend their interests in the legislature, session after session, and have been obliged to prove sometimes to more than one committee in a single session, that the measures proposed for the purpose of exacting an unjust revenue from the oyster growers were impracticable, unjust, and against public policy."

"The same questions have been tried out session after session and uniformly rejected, and yet they are brought before the legislature."

"A careful study of the protest recently presented by the Connecticut Oyster Growers to the Shell Fish Commission, and their protest to the Governor of Connecticut, shows the strong and clear statement of the conditions pertaining to the industry. It shows that the treatment which the industry has received has seriously depressed and diminished it. While it does not impair the quality of the product the output has been reduced and the acreage held by planters has decreased to the amount of some thousands of acres. Among the facts which are shown in these papers are the following:

"The law has been for more than thirty years, that the oyster grounds like real estate, should be assessed at their true market value. During the past five years assessments have been more than quadrupled in amount and in some cases, have been increased more than two thousand per cent. This has been done when the grounds in fact, are worth at the present time far less in the market than they were five years ago."

"The Clark of Shell Fisheries, who is the assessor of the grounds, has assessed oyster grounds at twice their value in some instances five times their value; in other instances twenty times and in some cases fifty times their market value. He has done this when owners of grounds have publicly offered them for sale for less than one-twentieth part of what he assessed them at. Oyster growers have been deprived of thousands of acres of oyster grounds by means which were nothing more or less than official confiscation by assessing the grounds at fifty times what they were worth and thus compelling their owners to abandon them."

"Arbitrary rules have been promulgated which had no warrant in law and such of the oyster growers as failed to accede to them were threatened with reprisal and their next assessment were raised in some instances to five times what they were before."

"In order that the matter may be properly realized suppose that thousands of acres of farm lands in this state were confiscated and their owners deprived of the title to these lands by assessment being made on the basis of the value of the land on these lands that the farmer would prefer to abandon them rather than to attempt to pay the unjust taxes laid upon them. This is just what has happened with thousands of acres of oyster ground and it is a gross injustice to their owners and greatly against public policy that this industry should thus be injured. The state and federal governments expend very wisely, millions of dollars in fostering agriculture and why should the state pursue an exactly opposite policy with oyster farming and permit its officials to persecute those engaged in this industry."

"The oyster industry has very much diminished and is in a very depressed condition. Many have abandoned the business entirely, and two very large corporations doing business in Connecticut, and Rhode Island, have gone into bankruptcy, representing a loss amounting to many millions of dollars. There have been many cases for the great depression in the oyster industry, some of which it is impossible to remedy by legislation, but without taking these at the present time the problem now is to reduce to a minimum the administration of the industry and how to encourage and foster it so that it may again return to a healthy growth instead of rapidly decreasing as it is at the present time."

"Governor Baldwin recommended the abolition of the Shell Fish Commission and the present Governor Holcomb has repeated his recommendation."

"The oyster growers of Connecticut presented a protest to the Shell Fish Commission against being compelled to go before the General Assembly every session, taking their time and requiring the employment of counsel to defend the industry against further exactions. Committee after Committee and legislative session after session have examined the measures proposed to add further burdens to the oyster industry, and have decided them impracticable, unjust and unequal for. Now the Shell Fish Commission and Clerk again recommend similar measures."

"The state of Connecticut must decide whether it will still further discourage, depress and injure this great food producing industry that furnishes food for millions of people. This decision must be made at a time when the cost of food is high and every means of producing food ought to be encouraged and fostered. It will decide whether to penalize food production by a productivity tax on oyster grounds which may perhaps later be a precedent for a productivity tax on farms and on land. It is just as unreasonable and improper upon oyster farms as it is upon other farms. It is a pernicious principle which should not be applied either to farms on land or in the water."

**Saved From Burns.**  
Since the fire which destroyed St. Peter's Episcopal church in Plymouth Saturday afternoon large crowds have visited the spot where for nearly a century and a quarter the church had stood. Sunday afternoon work of searching the ruins was begun and a number of things were unearthed, among which was half of a bell, that was installed in the steeple of the church in 1823. The old organ, which was stored in the basement, was saved. This is believed to be nearly as old as the church, but the exact date on which it was first used is not known. It is known, however, that in March, 1841, a pipe organ costing \$700, was installed to take the place of the one saved.

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### FAIRFIELD COUNTY NEWS

At Danbury, Wednesday, the jury in the case of Joseph S. Rowland vs. William E. Ritch returned a verdict for the plaintiff to recover \$256.67.

The parties conducted timber cutting operations in Ridgefield for about two years up to the time when the partnership was discontinued about a year ago. Shortly after the partnership was dissolved the plaintiff requested the defendant to pay him \$256.67 which he claimed was owing to him on the book accounts of the partnership, for timber which he cut at the request of the defendant and which the defendant afterwards refused to take. The defendant claimed that the reason he did not take the timber in question was that the said timber had been improperly piled and that it had been considerably damaged, and made unfit for use. The defendant claimed that Mr. Rowland had negligently managed the business and that as a result of this the defendant lost orders worth several thousands of dollars. The defendant asked that he be awarded \$4,500 damages over any amount that might be recovered by Mr. Rowland in his suit.

The house occupied by Mr. Demers a laborer, and located in Brookfield, was destroyed Friday evening.

Mad Dog Restriction.

As the result of the mad dog scare in Westport and Fairfield, now, Commissioner of Domestic Animals Phelps of Hartford has issued an order, effective next Monday morning, that all dogs in the town of Westport be muzzled for a period of three months. It is specifically stated that dogs on leashes shall be muzzled. Commissioner Phelps further orders that all dogs that have been bitten by other dogs known to have rabies or suspected of being infected, shall be mercifully killed and dogs which came in contact with those having, or suspected of having rabies but which were not bitten shall be confined. The dog warden is given the right to shoot infected dogs and other dogs not muzzled after the order is in effect.

Tax of 11 1-2 Mills.  
The town of Huntington has levied a tax of 11 1-2 mills.

Auto Wagon.

A touring car, owned and driven by Frank E. Bernier, an automobile dealer of Stamford, collided with a horse and wagon belonging to Timothy Loughlin of Greenwich Tuesday night. The horse was instantly killed and William Miller, the driver, and Gustave Carlson, who was with him, received cuts and bruises on the head. Bernier was placed under arrest on a charge of reckless driving. The wagon was demolished. Mr. Bernier's car was also damaged to such extent that it could not go away under its own power.

### LITCHFIELD COUNTY NEWS.

Confirmed as Postmaster.  
Edward J. Stuart was confirmed by the Senate Wednesday night to be postmaster at Lakeville.

Tax of 13 Mills.

Litchfield has levied a tax of 13 mills, an increase of 2 mills.

Still Cutting Ice.

The Berkshire Ice company is working a large force of men in the attempt to fill their remaining three ice houses before the ice goes out. Last year eleven out of fourteen storehouses remained unsold and last year's ice is still on tap. All the ice thus far cut is 15 inches thick on the lake, being about 11 inches thick after being planed and stored.

Held in Germany.

Charles Schultheis, who was married in Torrington last July and went to Germany for his wedding trip, was obliged to enter the German army, where he is side-de-camp to one of the generals. He has participated in several engagements. His bride is

### Chicago Republican

Mayorality Candidate is Great Sportsman

Narrowly Escaped Death.  
The almshouse at the Torrington town farm was destroyed Saturday night. The fire caught from the chimney. The occupants were in bed, and Mr. and Mrs. John Parsons, who have charge of the farm, were awakened by the crying of their baby. There were eleven inmates at the farm, six men, four women and one child. Two of the older people, one a very old woman and one a man, a cripple, were carried out by Mr. Parsons. They narrowly escaped death by suffocation. The building was valued at \$6,000, partly covered by insurance. A subscription paper is being circulated for the assistance of Parsons, who lost everything he owned in the fire. His face and neck were painfully burned in his rescue work. The fire will probably result in the establishment of a town farm more accessible to the borough. First Selectman George E. Cook's plan, if carried out, will be to sell the present farm for \$5,000 and with the proceeds outfit an insurance money, amounting to \$2,500, to buy land and build brick buildings for the care of the town charges. The balance of money required could be raised by laying a 1-mill tax.

Housewives may still keep on wearing the narrow skirts that have gone out of style, but they couldn't give them away to the hired girl.

Those athletic pictures you see in the newspapers now are not the champion running high jumper in the middle of his act, but merely Billy Sunday expounding the text.

It is officially announced that bright colored silks will be worn the coming summer by ladies of both sexes.

Connie Mack says that dancing the tango is an art and a science. It should also strengthen one for spading up the garden, but that is immaterial.

HOW TO PREVENT  
ACID STOMACHS

AND FOOD FERMENTATION

By a Stomach Specialist.

As a specialist who has spent many years in the study and treatment of stomach troubles, I have been forced to the conclusion that most people who complain of stomach trouble possess stomachs that are absolutely healthy and normal. The real trouble, that which causes all the pain and difficulty, is excessive acid in the stomach, aggravated by food fermentation. Hyperacidity irritates the delicate lining of the stomach and food fermentation causes wind which distends the stomach, abnormally causing that full bloated feeling. Thus both acid and fermentation interfere with and retard the process of digestion. The stomach is usually healthy and normal, but irritated almost past endurance by these foreign elements—acid and wind. In all such cases—and they comprise over 90 per cent of all stomach difficulties—the first and only step necessary is to neutralize the acid and stop the fermentation by taking in a little warm or cold water immediately after eating. From one to two teaspoonfuls of bismuthated magnesia, which is doubtless the best and only really effective antacid and food corrective known. The acid will be neutralized and the fermentation stopped almost instantly, and your stomach will at once proceed to digest the food in a healthy, normal manner. Be sure to ask your druggist for the bismuthated magnesia, as I have found other forms utterly lacking in its peculiarly valuable properties.—F. J. G.

### Chicago Republican Mayorality Candidate is Great Sportsman



Chicago, March 3.—William Hale Thompson is the Republican candidate for mayor of this city. He will oppose Robert M. Sweitzer, Democrat, who defeated Mayor Carter H. Harrison, five times mayor, for the nomination. Mr. Thompson is one of the best known athletic devotees in this city. Back in 1896 he was captain of the famous Chicago Athletic Club football team, which cleaned up everything in the country in the football line that year. As a young man Mr. Thompson was a cowpuncher in Nebraska and elsewhere in the West. He is an ardent yachtsman.

### REMARKABLE PLANT BLOOMS

ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY

What is one of the most remarkable varieties of plants ever cultivated burst into bloom in a Fifth Avenue home on Washington's Birthday and the next. The two specimens of it (the only pair in existence) were sent at once to a meeting of the Horticultural Society of New York.

The plant is a South African bulbous plant called the "Haenanthus" and the one which bloomed has been cultivated expressly for Mrs. Belmont Tiffany.

While the Haenanthus is quite different from century plants, certain experts say that it may be nearly one hundred years before it will blossom again, according to tradition of its native lairs. The plants were brought from South Africa about seven years ago and at that time it was doubted if they ever would bloom. The height is from two to three feet; the leaves being wide and rolling, one foot in length, while the blossoms (three on one specimen) have the appearance of women's powder puffs of fluffy paint brushes. Their color is peculiar purple, turning into yellow at the tips of the blossoms. Mrs. Tiffany will have her Haenanthus in the Red Cross tea garden at the forthcoming International Flower Show in March.

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